CARL JAMES BRADEN

ANNE GAMBREL (MCCARTHY) BRADEN

Background

Carl James Braden, born June 27, 1914, at New Albany, Indiana, is married to Anne Gambrel Braden, nee McCarthy, born July 28, 1924, at Louisville, Kentucky. They reside at 1403 Virginia Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky, and are both employed by the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF). They are coeditors of the SCEF publication "Southern Patriot." Information regarding their Communist Party (CP) membership was first received in 1949. They were publicly exposed as members of the CP by Mrs. Alberta Ahearn, a self-admitted former CP member and informant for the FBI, during Carl James Braden's trial in 1954.

The November 5, 1954, edition of the "Courier Journal," a Louisville, Kentucky, newspaper, indicated Carl and Anne Braden had been indicted by the State of Kentucky under statutes prohibiting sedition. On December 14, 1954, the "Louisville Times" reported Carl Braden was found guilty as charged. He appealed sentence and as a result of the Supreme Court's decision in a similar case involving Steve Nelson, the conviction of Carl Braden was reversed.

The "Courier Journal" of Louisville, Kentucky, on February 3, 1959, reported Carl Braden had been sentenced to one year in prison on a charge of contempt of Congress. The "Louisville Times" on February 27, 1961, reported the Supreme Court on that date affirmed this conviction. Braden entered jail on May 1, 1961, and was released from Federal Prison Camp, Allenwood, Pennsylvania, on February 1, 1962.

Religious Contacts and Religious Statements

As of January 3, 1952, most of the activities of the CP in Louisville, Kentucky, were carried out through the Progressive Party (PP) and fronts, either sponsored by the PP or motivated by

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PP members. Carl Braden made efforts to dominate the Militant Church Movement (MCM) in Louisville but was unsuccessful. The MCM is an organization composed principally of Baptist ministers of colored Baptist churches in the Louisville area and that this organization was under the control of Reverend J. C. Olden. Carl and Anne Braden have attempted to control the organization and desired to use it for publicizing the segregation issues advocated by the CP as well as the peace program of the Party. They have been fought over control by Reverend Olden who is not a communist.

Anne Braden addressed a rally of the MCM on April 22, 1951, giving a talk on "Current Civil Rights Issues" at which time she dealt principally with the cases of Willie McGee and Dr. W.E.B. DuBois. At this time these cases were part of the CP line on civil rights and were receiving national prominence in the columns of the "Daily Worker" and through activities of the Civil Rights Congress (CRC). The CRC has been designated by the Attorney General as a subversive organization.

On May 10, 1951, Anne Braden, on the basis of information she had received from the national headquarters of the CRC, was to get in touch with Reverend Hugh Brimm, a Baptist minister of Louisville, Kentucky.

Anne Braden contacted Hugh Brimm on several occasions during 1951 and requested him to prepare communications on behalf of the CRC. She further solicited his aid in a general program planned in behalf of CRC to fight the loyalty proceedings pending against Frank Grezlak.

A clipping from the "Jackson Daily News," Jackson, Mississippi, from the edition of May 6, 1951, indicated that Anne Braden, who identified herself as the Chairman of a group of 25 women from several northern and two southern states, had told the Jackson, Mississippi, police that the group was going to the hearing on a plea for clemency for Willie McGee. Mrs. Braden told the police she was representing several church groups, some of them Baptist.

Anne Braden appeared before a meeting of Negro Baptist ministers which was held at Louisville, Kentucky, on May 7, 1951. She told them of her experience at Jackson, Mississippi, in connection with the McGee demonstration.

As of June 6, 1951, Carl and Anne Braden and Alberta Ahearn were the only members of the MCM who were white. On May 29, 1951, Anne and Carl Braden attended a meeting of the MCM at the Immanuel Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky. Plans were formed to break down segregation in the Greyhound Bus Station in Louisville. The Bradens went along with other representatives of the MCM to talk to the manager of the Greyhound Bus Station.

During June, 1951, the Baptist ministers and deacons meeting at Louisville voted to withdraw support from the Inter-racial Hospital Movement and the MCM movement. The reason for the withdrawal was believed to be that they suspected association of these organizations with the PP and the CP.

A meeting of the PP of Louisville was held on May 27, 1951, at the apartment of Carl and Anne Braden. Carl Braden was reported to have discussed the importance of working with Negroes in churches even if the individual PP members did not like religion. Braden reportedly stated that he was an atheist but had only recently been confirmed in the Episcopal Church located at Shelby and St. Catherine Streets in Louisville, Kentucky.

During February, 1952, Anne Braden made preliminary arrangements for the appearance in Louisville of Reverend Richard Morford, Executive Director of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship (NCASF). Morford's appearance in Louisville was sponsored by the Louisville Peace Crusade. A meeting was held on February 12, 1952, and the subject was in attendance. Morford talked about peace and friendship with Russia. The NCASF has been cited by the Attorney General as a subversive organization.

During September, 1953, information was received that the MCM of Louisville, Kentucky, was originally an organization of Negro ministers and that this organization attracted the attention of Carl and Anne Braden in 1950. The Bradens became members after Carl Braden had succeeded in having the membership basis of the MCM changed to include laymen. Since that time the CP had been able to use the MCM in connection with several racial issues on which the position of the MCM coincided with the CP position.

A sermon was preached on February 6, 1955, by Reverend William Howard Melish at the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, New York. A booklet was published by the Episcopal League for Social Action which is characterized in the booklet as a national, unofficial organization made up of bishops, clergy and laymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States who are concerned with the application of Christian principles to the contemporary social order in such areas as international peace, civil liberties and social change. The sermon was entitled "When Christians Become Subversive" and was the story of the life of Anne Braden, her religious background and upbringing and the development of her interest in the welfare of the Negro race. The sermon relates to the story of the "Wade Case," the indictment of seven individuals for sedition, including Carl and Anne Braden, and the conviction of Carl Braden. In his sermon Reverend Melish stated that there was no proof linking the Bradens with dynamiting the Wade home but that a surprise witness was introduced who testified she acted as an informant for the FBI and joined the CP, being inducted into the CP by Carl Braden. The sermon characterized as "astonishing" that she had acted as an informant for the FBI since January, 1951, in view of the fact that this informant and Anne Braden were arrested in Jackson, Mississippi, in connection with a civil rights demonstration in October, 1952. Melish stated "Obviously someone was engaged in duplicity or else misrepresenting the truth." Melish stated that there is "little substance" to the charges of criminal syndicalsim, sedition and subversion and asked the question "Is the desire for simple racial justice sedition and subversion?" Melish suggested that the National Council of Churches come to the aid of the Bradens.

During February, 1955, a mimeographed letter on the letterhead of the World Fellowship, Incorporated, Concord, New Hampshire, dated February 17, 1955, was given wide-spread mailing. This letter was over the signature of Dr. Willard Uphaus, Executive Director. Uphaus made reference to the sermon of Reverend Melish and stated he was "astonished and grieved that the citizens of Louisville, Kentucky, could permit such a miscarriage of justice as that which befell Anne and Carl Braden." Uphaus further stated "They are being framed under an old sedition statute."

The "New York Daily Mirror" on page 12 of its May 15, 1950, issue carried an article "Budenz Brands Melish as Red." This article reported that Louis Budenz, formerly Managing Editor of the "Daily Worker," testified in a civil suit in Greenwich, Connecticut, that Reverend William Howard Melish was a member of the CP. In his book "Men Without Faces," Budenz stated that the Chairman of the NCASF when he left the Party in 1945 was Reverend William Howard Melish. Melish had been placed in that post only a short time before. Budenz stated in the book that prior to getting Melish the appointment the Politburo had him interview Melish on his attitude toward the CP and its leadership. He stated that he found Melish's opinions sound from a CP viewpoint and that shortly after he reported this to the Politburo they sanctioned Melish's appointment as head of the NCASF.

In July, 1951, Reverend Willard Uphaus was elected as one of the two national codirectors of the American Peace Crusade (APC). Uphaus was a long-time member of the Socialist Party in New Haven, Connecticut, and during 1950, Uphaus became more radical in his views. If Uphaus was not a communist he at least was being used by the communists in praising the Russians "for their true efforts for peace." The APC has been designated by the Attorney General as a subversive organization.

On February 7, 1956, the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (ECLC) announced that a meeting would be held in Concert Hall of the Siloam Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, New York, for the purpose of introducing Carl Braden and Andrew Wade. The announcement by the ECLC stated in part "because he helped his friend get such a house, a believing and practicing Christian is being railroaded to jail for fifteen years." According to the "Daily Worker," October 8, 1951, the ECLC was formed on October 7, 1951, by 150 notables to help mobilize public opinion in support of the American Constitutional guarantees of civil liberties. The issue of August, 1954, of "Political Affairs" carried an article by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, convicted CP functionary, which referred to the ECLC as one of the "forces carrying on the defense of the Bill of Rights today."

Carl Braden was in attendance and took a leading part in the organizational meeting of "The Committee on Local Arrangements for the Conference on Voting Restrictions in Southern States" which was held January 21, 1958, at the Asbury Methodist Church, 11th and K Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

In June, 1959, press releases and publicity material regarding a May 22, 1959, appearance in Louisville, Kentucky, of Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth at a rally for civil rights and civil liberties at the West Chestnut Street Baptist Church were disbributed. This meeting was to be coordinated by the SCEF of which Reverend Shuttlesworth was identified as a board member. This release named Dr. M.M.D. Perdue, Pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist Church; The Right Reverend C. Eubank Tucker, Bishop, A.M.E. Zion Church; and Dr. Daniel J. Hughlett, Executive Secretary, Jefferson County Sunday School Association. All of these were identified as members of the board of SCEF and as cochairmen of the committee sponsoring the appearance of Shuttlesworth. Carl and Anne Braden were named among the other members of the sponsoring committee. In his speech, Shuttlesworth praised the Bradens as typical of a very large segment of American white moderates and liberals who will risk even life itself for a practical democracy.

Mrs. Alberta Ahearn, a self-admitted former member of the CP has stated that during the period of her CP activity, Reverend M.M.D. Perdue had been a member of at least three organizations of interest to the Louisville CP as targets for infiltration or organizations promoted and controlled by persons known to her to be CP members at the time.

Mrs. Ahearn also has stated that Reverend D. J. Hughlet was active in at least two of these organizations.

Mrs. Ahearn has stated that during the Summer and Fall of 1954 that C. Eubank Tucker was cochairman of a communist controlled defense committee which was active in support of the defense of Braden and fellow sedition defendants.

There appeared in the "Ogden Standard-Examiner," dated October 30, 1960, an article by Jack Lotto. Lotto said that the SCEF is a procommunist front active in 17 southern states and Lotto identified Carl Braden as a CP member.

During May, 1961, some people in the Washington, D. C., area received letters enclosing a petition for clemency for Carl Braden addressed to the President of the United States. These letters were signed by numerous individuals, the following named are listed as ministers: Ralph D. Abernathy, Montgomery, Alabama; William B. Abbott, Norfolk, Virginia; W. W. Finlator, Raleigh, North Carolina; Clarence Jordan, Americus, Georgia; Martin Luther King, Atlanta, Georgia; James Morris Lawson, Jr., Shelbyville, Tennessee; Edgar A. Love, Baltimore, Maryland; Fred L. Shuttlesworth, Birmingham, Alabama; C. K. Steele, Sr., Tallahassee, Florida; Charles Eubank Tucker, Louisville, Kentucky; and Wyatt Tee Walker, Atlanta, Georgia.

On November 8, 1961, a delegation headed by Clarence Pickett was to see Reed Cozart, Pardon Attorney, United States Department of Justice, and then to the White House after which there would be a press conference at Davis House, 1822 R Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. The Washington Address-Telephone Director lists the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Davis House, for the address 1822 R Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. Clarence Pickett's appointment at the Department of Justice was for the purpose of presenting a petition asking for executive clemency for Carl Braden and Frank Wilkinson. The 1960-61 edition of "Who's Who" lists one Clarence Evan Pickett, clergyman, who was ordained to the ministry of the Society of Friends in 1913. He is listed as Executive Secretary Emeritus of the AFSC.

Carl and Anne Braden were in Birmingham, Alabama, on April 13 and 14, 1962, to attend a "conference on the deep South," the host for which was the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, a Negro group favoring racial integration headed by Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth. Carl Braden made a brief talk at one of the workshops connected with the conference on April 14, 1962. He talked mostly of his own experiences in prison and his work for integration following his release. He claimed that he had assisted Reverend Shuttlesworth in getting out of jail in Birmingham where he had been sentenced as a result of his racial activities.

On January 21, 1962, Anne Braden spoke at a gathering at the Rock Spring Congregational Church in Arlington, Virginia. She spoke under the sponsorship of the Social Action Committee of the church. In the announcement for the meeting it was stated Mrs. Braden would discuss the civil liberties guarantees under the First Amendment, how their denial affects civil rights movements in the South and what concerned citizens can do about it. She was identified as field secretary of the SCEF.

The April 9, 1963, issue, Valley Edition of the "Charleston Gazette," newspaper, published in Charleston, West Virginia, carried an article entitled "Work Earns Them 'Red' Label." This was an article concerning Carl and Anne Braden. In this article Braden stated that the failure of the white Christian church to live up to its teachings is another great obstacle to progress in the civil rights field. His wife partly disagreed with him and stated "The church has done as much or more as any other institution because of the individuals its teachings have produced." She stated that both she and her husband are Episcopalians.

The following are ministers with whom the Bradens have had contact at sometime or other during 1963: Fred Shuttlesworth, Cincinnati, Ohio; Maurice McCracken, Cincinnati, Ohio, Kelly Smith, Cleveland, Ohio; Frank Gordon, Knoxville, Tennessee, Andrew White, Nashville, Tennessee; Lawrence Campbell, Danville, Virginia; Virgil Wood, Lynchburg, Virginia; Martin Luther King, Atlanta, Georgia; L. W. Chase, Danville, Virginia; Greta W. Crosby, Lynchburg, Virginia; and Herman Ford, Richmond, Virginia.